

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
April 26, 2005**

Members Present: Thompson, Morris, Carroll, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Newstadt, Spitzfaden, Timberman, Wasson and Webb

Members Excused: Ennis

Staff Present: Davila

Guests: Kevin Rychlicki (BHH Architects & Nason Construction), Al Carter (SOS), Ron Bythwood (DOL Regional Coordinator, "Hire a Vet" Program), Fran Daney and Dave Gillan (KWVA), Burton Barr (NARFE), Ed Moczulski (LP Lo-DEL), Tom Daws and Ralph Hoag (VVA)

A moment of silence is observed for the late Reese Phillips, past Commissioner.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Thompson opens with remarks on HB129 (State Employees' Pension Plan) and announced that the Bond Bill Hearing for the Commission and the Department of State agencies will be held on May 2, 2005, beginning at 11:30 AM, in the Joint Finance Committee Hearing Room, Legislative Hall. Governor Minner has recommended approval of Northern Cemetery improvements, so it is likely it will pass. The State Archives is dedicating a historical marker for Medal of Honor recipient William L. Nelson on May 7, 2005, 11:00 AM, at Meredith Middle School in Middletown. The State Personnel Office has received 28 applications for the Veterans Home Administrator position and discussed the interview process. The DCVA will sponsor a Women Veterans Symposium on April 30, 2005, at the Buena Vista Conference Center in Newark. Discussion concerning the Commission sponsoring the Veterans Day 5K Run/Walk.

DAS VETERANS HOME UPDATE

Mr. Rychlicki reported that they have received preliminary approval from the City of Milford and the site work is being bid and it is possible that construction on the road work and ponds may begin in the next two weeks. He continued to discuss additional details about the Veterans Home and there was an open discussion.

Mr. Bythwood presented information and discussed details about the Jobs for Veterans Act and the Hire Vets First program. There was discussion about programs that are offered or should be offered to individuals leaving the military.

Mr. Barr reads information pertaining to Public Service Recognition Week.

Commissioner Harden makes a correction to the March Meeting Minutes; she states that she did not refer to scheduling a FACC meeting, but a Commission Cemetery Committee meeting.

MOTION BY CARROLL TO ACCEPT MARCH COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED, SECONDED BY LARDIZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Newstadt reported that the Northern Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) met on April 18, 2005, 6:30 PM, and it was a very positive meeting. He also gave details of issues discussed at the meeting. He reported that a meeting with the Southern FACC is scheduled for May 17, 2005, 6:00 PM. There was further discussion concerning improvements proposed for the Northern Cemetery.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Kitson reported that they have a speaker, Past Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, Paul Spera. Commissioner Newstadt reported that the KWVA is allowing the JWV to use their Honor Guard for the Flag Ceremony. There were comments in reference to past ceremonies.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Carroll reported that he attended the review of the Joint Commission of Veterans Affairs in Legislative Hall. The meeting ended with questions on who might be the future director. He also reported that the Home was on time and on budget. The Veterans Home fund totals \$142,118.49 and the last deposit was from the Division of Revenue, mostly from income tax returns. Discussion about the Home followed.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that he thought the hearing went well and he received some positive feedback from issues that he presented.

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that we are advertising for the casual seasonal positions at the Northern Cemetery. All positions are filled at the Southern Cemetery.

GROUNDBREAKING & DEDICATION

Commissioner Morris reported that he will schedule a meeting with Mr. Davila and the Groundbreaking Committee. Mr. Davila reported that they have 50 entrenching tools and that he is having 1,000 pins made that say "Veterans Home - Milford DE, 2005". Commissioner Morris encouraged all veterans to turn out for the event. Mr. Davila elaborated on some of the plans they have for the Groundbreaking & Dedication. Discussion followed.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

Commissioner Kitson reported that there is a meeting scheduled for this committee after today's Commission Meeting.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Newstadt (JWV) – Will have its annual committee luncheon swearing-in of the incoming officers on May 22, 2005, at the Double Tree. The old Commander, Myron Gold, passed away a few months ago and the new State Commander will be Len Markovitz. Newstadt will be attending the ROA (Reserve Officers Association) State Convention in Dover on May 7, 2005, and will provide an update.

Wasson (DELVETS) – We are undergoing renovations of Post 1 on Naamans Road.

Harden (WAVES Nat'l) –We had our Unit 10 meeting, at which time I provided the total of the Veterans Home fund and briefed them on updates concerning the Veterans Home. I was pleased to meet the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs at the VA Hospital. Do not forget we have the VA Patient Carnival on May 7, 2005, and hope to have a lot of you there.

Webb (VVA) – I would like to see a copy of that letter you promised you would produce today and a copy of our Constitution & By-Laws.

Chairman Thompson stated that he is still waiting for a written response from the Attorney General. There was a complaint made that this was his third tour; he has served only one term. George Hastings was elected as Chairman in 2004. When he was not reappointed as a Commissioner, Thompson took over for the rest of his term.

Kitson (VFW) – VFW State Convention is June 10-11, 2005, at the Sheraton in Dover.

Morris (American Legion) – We will be holding our State Convention in Dover, dates undetermined. The National Convention will be in Hawaii. The American Legion is still working strong on the “Buck a Minute” Program. They would also like to see the responsibility of the Veterans Home be placed in the hands of the Commission.

Thompson (MCL) – Our Northern most attachment in the Wilmington area is having problems raising monies for their various projects at the VA Hospital; such as food and trips. A lot of their corporate sponsors, due to a drop in profits, have been backing out.

Lardizzone (DAV) – We just had our DAV District Meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We had our Senior Vice Commander from National, Paul Jackson, attend and he will be the new National Commander for DAV. New Jersey and Delaware are getting together to use Fort Dix for all returning active duty personnel, National Guardsmen or Reservists to set up a TAP program. Our State Convention will be June 24-25, 2005, at the Sheraton in Dover. Our National Convention will be August 13-17, 2005, in Las Vegas, NV.

Carroll (MOPH) – On Saturday, I attended the African American Medal of Honor Recipient Memorial Service in Wilmington at 1:00 PM. I went as a Commissioner representing the MOPH. It had to be relocated due to the weather, but none the less, it was a nice ceremony. Our organization plans to be a part of the Newark Memorial Day Parade on Sunday May 15, 2005. Our organization is involved in leadership award programs and JROTC award programs to some 16 different schools throughout the State. The National Convention will be held in Springfield, MO, in August 2005.

Magner (AMVETS) – Department of Delaware is having their Convention on June 25, 2005, in Angola. Also, AMVETS will be involved in the Patient Carnival. Post 1183 plans to be a part of the Newark Memorial Day Parade. Daimler Chrysler is lending us two new Dodge Durangos to use in the Parade. I will be doing a short speech at the First Baptist Church off 141 and Route 273, this is a project shepherded by Senator Dori Connor, in conjunction with the Spirit of Liberty, a traveling bell that goes around the country.

Gillan (KWVA) – KWVA will also be at the First Baptist Church and will be participating at the Patient Carnival on May 7, 2005. They will be in the Newark Parade on May 15, 2005, and the Wilmington Parade on May 30, 2005. We will also be having the annual Korean Community picnic at Belvedere State Park. We will be at the Bridge and in the New Castle Parade on June 4, 2005. We still have not made a decision about the Smyrna and the Georgetown Parades, but I am sure we will have some kind of representation there.

Lank (MOWW) – We had our spring meeting two weeks ago and the new Scout Executive for the Boy Scouts of America, Delmarva Council, gave a talk about what the Boy Scouts are doing these days. We are trying to establish a new chapter of MOWW in the lower part of the State, we only have one chapter. The Kiwanis Armed Forces Day luncheon will be on Wednesday, May 18, 2005, at the DuPont Country Club.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Thompson opened discussion concerning the Veterans Day 5K run/walk and a vote was taken.

MOTION BY LARDIZZONE THAT THE COMMISSION USE THEIR NAME TO SPONSOR THE VETERANS DAY 5K RUN/WALK, SECONDED BY HARDEN, MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Newstadt suggested adding an item “For the Good and Welfare of the Organization” to the agenda and explains reasoning.

MOTION BY NEWSTADT TO ADD “FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION” TO THE CLOSING PORTION OF THE AGENDA, SECONDED BY MORRIS, MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Davila discusses the Veterans Day Fund and requested contributions from each of the veterans’ organizations.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MAY 24, 2005 (11:00 AM)

LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE

ADJOURNED